

Our thoughts on ISO26000, our sparkly new blog, the usual fish update, flapjacks and other sustainability news.



It has been a busy few months at M4C spires - not that we are complaining. As well as working on plenty of reports and other projects we took our usual stand at Sustainabilitylive! in May, treating attendees to our now-famous ginger cordial along with flapjacks and our very colourful CR process (see below).

Sustainabilitylive! gave us a chance to talk with lots of interesting people working in various areas of sustainability. Giving us new ideas and plenty to think about.

But we don't just talk. We have also been busy with our own CSR activities - including planting bee-friendly flowers, submitting our sustainability information to the Mayday Network, composting teabags (despite a compost bin theft) and continuing to work with our charity partners.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann'.



M4C are sustainability specialists with a strong focus on communications and engagement. We work with businesses helping them to develop and manage their environmental and social activities and then promote them, both internally, to their employees, and externally, to their customers and other stakeholders. For more information and case studies, please visit our website:

www.m4c-sustainability.co.uk



ISO26000 – our thoughts so far

There seems to be a multitude of sustainability related standards out there – many incredibly specific, others incredibly broad.

The one that caught our imagination when it was released back in November was ISO26000 – partly because of those magic, globally recognised three letters at the start; partly because of its ambition and scope; and partly because it doesn't try to make sustainability something you do, get right, and are certified against – it recognises that sustainability is a broad church to say the least.

When we started helping [Yearsley](#) develop their approach to CSER and implement ISO14001 in January of this year, we decided to use the ISO26000 guidelines.

We are well along Yearsley's journey now, although clearly with lots of road still to travel. Has ISO26000 changed our approach? Probably not. Is that a bad thing? Probably not. The guidelines reflect the approach we, and possibly most in sustainability, already take to developing and implementing a CSER strategy. And so is a useful reference for those working in sustainability and a fantastic guide for those new to it.

Using the guidelines has, if anything, cemented our approach, particularly when we looked back at our [CR process](#) document that we developed in 2010 and realised how well it worked with ISO26000.

Inspired by this, we used our CR process as the basis of our stand at Sustainabilitylive! this year – and, literally, plastered our walls with it. We don't think it is perfect and, truth be told, the process is never as linear as we make out – companies start in different places, or do a bit of step 5 before they even think about step 3 and, in reality, may never progress past step 7. It lives in an ideal world, fairly detached from reality. But that doesn't mean it isn't a helpful tool.

What do you think – of our process and ISO26000? Do either reflect your experience of developing a sustainability strategy? What do you think is the ideal CR process? Perhaps you could add your thoughts on our [blog](#).

20 things we have been doing recently...

...writing the copy for **Diageo's Environment brochure**...setting up the **M4C** blog...developing the **Brother UK** 2010/11 CR report...creating a logo and branding for **IPF's safety** initiative... having our annual stand at **Sustainabilitylive!**... working on **Provident Financial's** 2010 CR report... testing **SABMiller's** sustainable development management system SAM...updating our charity partner **Cre8's** promotional materials... developing **Yearsley's** CSER strategy using ISO26000 and implementing ISO14001...writing **Allianz Insurance's** 2010/11 CSR report...helping **Astra Signs** with a proposal...talking to lots and lots of people...running webinars for **SABMiller**... developing and designing **Canon Europe's** 2010/11 Sustainability report including 16 local versions in 11 languages including Arabic, Russian and Turkish! ...writing narratives describing **SABMiller's** Sustainable Development results for their external website...writing a journal piece on the benefits of foaming handwash for **Deb**... helping to organise **Green Mondays** in the North West... planting bee friendly flowers... having various computer meltdowns - testing the robustness of our back-up systems...and taking on **Jess**, our newest employee...phew!



Flapjack recipe

125g butter
100g soft brown sugar
4tbsp golden syrup
250g oats

Preheat your oven to 180C / gas mark 4. Butter and line a 20cm baking tray with baking paper. Melt the butter, sugar and golden syrup together in a pan over a low heat and stir in the oats. Pour into the baking tray and press it down with either your fingers or a wooden spoon. Cook for 25-30 minutes, until the top is golden. Remove from the oven, slice into cubes of your preferred size (small if you are giving them away, enormous if you aren't). Desperately wait for them to cool before tucking in.



RIP
COCO

Fish update

In our sub-aquatic world it has been 6 months of highs, lows and puzzled faces. The highs were provided by the introduction of 12 new fish to the tank, all these cheerful characters fit in well. The lows were provided by the loss of the beloved Coco the Clown Loach – one of the oldest and most colourful fish in the tank. The puzzled faces were provided by the sudden colour changes of Forbes in our cold water tank – who went from grey, to two-tone silver and black, to orange. It must be said he seems much happier with his new tone.

A few headlines that have caught our eye:

- BBC forced to apologise for 'staged footage' of child labour in a documentary about Primark. Telegraph
- The FT's Responsible Business Special Report. Financial Times (you will need any account to view)
- Sustainable growth is the new incarnation for capitalism. Financial Times (you will need an account to view)
- The new CSR: This time it's profitable - including case studies on M&S and Unilever. Marketing Week
- How well has the 'greenest government ever' done on environmental issues? Guardian
- Pachamama, or Mother Earth, earns equal rights to human beings under new Bolivian law. Guardian

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